

June 18, 2014

### **No need to be nervous about your interview**

**Question:** *I'm interviewing for a visa for the first time next week. I'm a bit nervous, what can I expect on my interview date? And what time should I appear at the building entrance?*

First of all, there's no need to be nervous! Of the thousands of applicants we see every month, more than 70% qualify for visas. That means only 3 of every 10 applicants are denied.

The time of your arrival is the time you have been assigned by the appointment system. Let us repeat that: The time you have been assigned is *not* your appointment time – it's your *arrival* time. There is no need to show up earlier than that arrival time. In fact, due to space constraints and security requirements, you will not be asked to go through security until your appointment time. Your actual interview will take place after a number of other steps – explained below – have been completed.

Upon your timely arrival at the applicant entrance of the consular section, you will be greeted by a member of our staff (called a "greeter"). The greeter will ask to see your confirmation letter (which you printed when you completed your on-line application), your passport and photos (2 photos, 2 inches by 2 inches in size, against a neutral background).

After reviewing your documents, our greeter will direct you through security, where you will put your bag through an x-ray device, and you will walk through a metal detector. Remember, certain objects cannot be brought into the building, and there is no place at the embassy where you can lock away prohibited items, so make sure to leave your electronics, powders (including powdered makeup) and other prohibited items at home. You can read more about prohibited items at our website here: [http://kingston.usembassy.gov/visa\\_services/access-and-security.html](http://kingston.usembassy.gov/visa_services/access-and-security.html). Please remember that consular officers cannot accept documents in sealed envelopes (the only exception is medical exams for immigrant visa interviews). If you have an invitation letter, job letter, school transcripts, or any other document you want to show the consular officer that is in a sealed envelope, make sure to remove it from the envelope before entering the embassy.

After you have passed security, the embassy greeters will direct you towards intake, where you will be given a number, your fingerprints will be taken (digitally – there is no ink involved) and your application and photograph will be loaded into the system. After intake, you will be asked to take a seat until a consular officer is ready to interview you. The Embassy has both indoor and outdoor seating. The outdoor seating is covered with a large awning, and there is a snack stand in case you are hungry or thirsty. There is also a television in the outdoor waiting area. You are welcome to bring a book or toys for children, because processing times do fluctuate. Because times fluctuate, you should plan to be at the Embassy between one to two hours.

When the consular officer is ready to interview, you will be randomly assigned to an interview window. The consular officer will review your application and ask you questions about your intended trip to the U.S. and about your family and professional ties to Jamaica. The interview itself usually only lasts a few minutes. The officer will then let you know whether or not your visa was approved, and if it was approved, give you a sheet that talks about DHL courier delivery. In some circumstances, the officer might request that you send in additional information or come in for a follow-up interview if a decision cannot be made that same day.

In most cases, applicants already fill out the DHL registration form indicating their delivery preferences when they fill out the application form. In these cases, you can go home directly after the interview. If you traveled here from the Cayman Islands and are leaving Jamaica soon, you may need to register with DHL in Kingston first before you go back to the Cayman Islands.

If the officer was unable to grant you a visa, you will get a sheet of paper explaining under what section of the law you were ineligible for the visa. In most cases, applicants can reapply later on once they can show they are better established and more likely to return to Jamaica.

In short, there is no need to be nervous, there are plenty of people to help you if you get lost, and everyone at the Embassy is committed to providing good customer service and treating our applicants with respect, whether or not they can be granted a visa. The most important thing to remember is to relax, be honest in your interview, and if you are able to explain why you want to travel and what would bring you back to Jamaica, you shouldn't have anything to worry about.

*You can find more information about how to travel to the U.S. on our website, [www.kingston.usembassy.gov](http://www.kingston.usembassy.gov). Keep on top of Embassy news on our Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/pages/US-Embassy-Jamaica> and by following USEmbassyJA on Twitter. We also answer general visa questions on our Facebook and Twitter pages.*